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In England, however, and some other countries, she breeds in chimneys, and seems to prefer those stacks where there is a constant fire, not that she can subsist in the immediate shaft where there is a constant fire, but prefers one adjoining to that of the kitchen, and disregards the perpetual smoke of that funnel. She chooses this situation, probably to secure her brood from hawks, owls, and other birds of prey, constructing her nest five or six feet down the chimney.

The martin constructs its habitation beneath the eaves of houses, chiefly in towns and villages, trusting, as it were, to man for safety and protection. The swift, in the same manner; but being in its habits much shyer, it prefers more remote situations, such as churches and old castles: and the sand or bank martin builds in the banks of rivers and such places as seem most convenient for incubation.

It has been supposed that the martin takes care to build its nest only in the fore part of the day, and that the labour is intermitted in the afternoon, in order that it may acquire solidity. They have, however, been known to begin their labour in the afternoon, from no other apparent reason, than that they preferred taking the materials from the sea-shore, which was convenient, but covered with the tide in the morning, to fetching it from double the distance, where it might have been had at all hours.

The following anecdote of the town martin is interesting:—A pair of these birds had just finished their nest, when it was taken possession of by a sparrow, which being firmly intrenched, bid defiance to the united force of the two martins to dislodge her. After various unsuccessful attempts, they flew away, and the spectators imagined that they had given up the possession; but in a short time they returned, accompanied with the whole phalanx of their companions in the village; but even this strong body was unable to force the citadel, for the sparrow being completely covered, and presenting her strong bill to the assailants, every effort to dislodge her proved ineffectual. The scene now became highly interesting, when, after numberless efforts and trials of skill on the part of the martins, they all, as if by general orders, flew away: the spectators thought that they were completely foiled; but in a short time they returned, and in an instant closed the sparrow up in the nest with clay, which they brought in their bills, and left her to perish.

The usefulness of these birds to human comfort is seldom or never estimated as it deserves. Birds in general devour more food than other animals, in proportion to their size, and those which use the greatest exertions require the greatest portion. It is almost astonishing to consider what thousands of insects the swallow tribe destroy for us during the summer season, but chiefly the common *black fly*, which so often incommodes our houses, and if suffered to live and multiply, would, in a great measure, destroy our comfort and enjoyments, so that it is the bounden duty of every one to cherish and protect, as far as possible, every species of the swallow tribe, instead, as is too often done, of wantonly destroying them. But as the opinion, or advice of an obscure writer like me may perhaps have little effect on the majority of the readers of the Penny Journal, take the following from the pen of one of the first philosophers of the age—Sir Humphry Davy:—

"I delight in this living landscape! The swallow is one of my favourite birds, and a rival of the nightingale; for he glads my sense of hearing. He is the joyous prophet of the year, the harbinger of the best season; he has a life of enjoyment amongst the loveliest forms of nature; winter is unknown to him, and he leaves the green meadows of England in autumn, for the myrtle and orange groves of Italy, and for the palms of Africa; he has always objects of pursuit, and his success is secure. Even the beings selected for his prey are poetical, beautiful, and transient. The ephemeral are saved by his means from a slow and lingering death in the evening, and killed in a moment when they have known nothing of life but pleasure. He is the constant destroyer of insects, the friend of man; and with the stork and the ibis, may be regarded as a sacred bird. This instinct, which gives him his appointed seasons, and which teaches him always when and where

to move, may be regarded as flowing from a divine source; and he belongs to the oracles of nature, which speak the awful and intelligible language of a present Deity."

The whole species is formed for rapid and almost continual flight; the swift, in particular, seldom alights, but performs almost all its functions, with the exception of incubation, on the wing; and in the evening, when serenading their sitting mates, though their notes, considered apart from associations, are by no means pleasing, yet, when taken in connexion with what they are about, the rapid and graceful motions of their flight, and the fine summer evenings in which it is performed, they are then truly pleasing to the lovers of rural prospects and rural scenery.

Ballymena, May 1, 1834.

J. G.

\*.\* The writer of this article had, in 1829, an excellent opportunity of ascertaining the great quantity of flies daily destroyed by the common swallow; in a nest, immediately under constant inspection, while feeding the young ones, they sometimes dropped what they brought, perhaps through the awkwardness of the nestlings, and which consisted of different sorts of flies, chiefly of the common house fly; they were entangled in a sort of *saliva*, and some of them alive; on being counted, they generally amounted to twelve or fourteen; and between the hours of ten in the morning and six in the evening, twenty visits were made to the nest by the parent birds; but taking the average number of flies at ten, two hundred flies were killed daily, to support the brood during the above mentioned hours, besides what supported the old ones: how many more were destroyed in the mornings and evenings could not conveniently be ascertained. The story is well known of a thin plate of brass having been fixed on a swallow, with this inscription, "Prithee, swallow, whither goest thou in winter?" The bird returned next spring, with the answer subjoined, "*To Anthony, of Athens*. Why dost thou enquire?" See *White's Nat. History of Selborne*, with notes by Captain Brown, F. L. S. &c., page 150.

#### OUR LETTER BOX.

As the sweepings of an editor's study have before now afforded subject matter for a volume, it will not, perhaps, be considered very surprising that in the course of our editorial duties we should have realized as many articles on different subjects, as would fill half a dozen volumes. We think we promised occasionally to treat our readers with a few original rhymes from our Poetical Letter Box; and as our volume has now come to a close, in order to redeem our pledge, we select the following, as no bad specimen of the articles furnished us. We have certainly seen much worse "in splendid quartos finely gilt."

#### THE DUBLIN STEAM-BOAT.

I once came from Dublin aboard a steam-packet,  
That swam in the Liffey, alongside the quay;  
And sure such a sight, such a powerful racket,  
Never before left Dublin bay—  
Such hauling and driving,  
And shoving and striving,  
With some making money, some making away:  
Going and coming, embarking and landing,  
Dozens of four-leggers driven aboard;  
Fruit-women moving about, notwithstanding,  
And steam in a boiler, good jewel, how it roared!  
Soon on the height of the deep we were gathered,  
Looking so fresh in the beams of the moon;  
Brian Malone, and big Freney from Fethard,  
Biddy Molloy, and Pat Muldoon;  
A weaver from Derry,  
A piper from Kerry,  
A brisk Merry-Andrew that winked us a tune:  
Three score Connaught-rangers, a bluff cattle-jobber,  
With forty fat wethers to come at his call;  
A Mullingar higgler, and pedlar from Nobber,  
A child that soon began to bawl.  
There was O'Flynn, from the wide bog of Allen,  
Smoking his pipe, with a spade in his hand;  
Teddy Sughrue, and the sweet Nelly Fallon,  
Myself, and the friends I left on land.  
A foreigner's monkey,  
A fish-hawker's donkey,  
And three cockle-pickers from Irishtown strand;

All in one boat, and all bound for one haven,  
That wonderful town, which they call Liverpool;  
"Where a black cloud, like a seven-winged raven,  
Hangs overhead," says Murtagh Toole.  
Many a hand held a sprig of shillela,  
And many another held nothing at all,  
While some sat on hampers, and boxes quite gaily,  
Some lay at full length, and looked so tall;  
More bundled together,  
To keep out the weather,  
Like turf in a kitchen or gentleman's hall:  
Thus did we sail towards rocky Dunleary,  
And turning at last round the black head of Howth;  
I sat down beside my old friend, Farmer Carey,  
And seated the child between us both.  
We sat with our backs to the captain's big smoker,  
Posted on deck like a soldier on guard;  
While at its side stood another small joker,  
That roared like a bull, and kept spitting so hard.  
"Musha, won't you be easy?"  
Says old Mrs. Casey,  
"And let us alone you young saucy blackguard."  
"But is it any advantage, my darlings,  
Upon the bleak ocean to fret or to frown;  
Here, sing up together, like so many starlings,  
And then with a drop wash all grief down."  
Every boy gave a whack with his wattle,  
And quickly the joke and the ballad went round;  
With shake of the hand and a shake of the bottle,  
Kindly the lazy night was crowned:  
Thus children of Erin  
To Britain's isle steer in,  
As light and as noisy as cocks in a pound.  
Och, doesn't it do any heart good to see them  
Carrying sweetly wherever they go,  
A drop, and a twig, and a bit of fun with them,  
To cheer any friend, or thwart a foe.  
*Liverpool.*

HUGH C——.

## THE PIPER AND MERMAID.

Bold Conor Camack, from Mullinahack,  
Played the best planxty in Leinster;  
At wedding and fair, and everywhere,  
Conor would make every shin stir.  
One dark night in May, as old people say,  
Conor took shipping at Skerries;  
A town in Fingal, a little too small,  
Harbouring boats and wherries.  
When morning did dawn, o'er ocean's green lawn,  
All grew bewitchingly merry;  
And Conor, at last, sat down by the mast,  
Playing his lilt in the wherry:  
It spread like sweet oil from Swords to Baldoyle,  
Made Howth look a something less gloomy;  
Made rugged Lambay look pretty and gay,  
And Port Saint Marnock roomy.  
The stones on the ground, at hearing the sound,  
Hardly could keep themselves easy;  
And fine stacks of wheat, not having the feet,  
Shook till their heads grew dizzy.  
Then old Donabate first put out its pate,  
And there to this day it keeps listening;  
The old cow and calf were going to laugh,  
And Ireland's eye all glistening.  
And fair Malahide smiled into the tide,  
The ling about Rush were delighted;  
Air, ocean, and strand, became fairy land,  
Wherever that music lighted.  
Conor stopped for to drink—but what do you think—  
One of the sea-woman's daughters,  
Without more ado, or stocking or shoe,  
Appeared above the waters.  
Her eyes were like pearls, her head like a girl's.  
Her cheeks of a hue rather mealy;  
Her curls a sea-green, and her beautiful skin  
As brown as a dry shillela.  
Says she, with a look as sharp as a hook,  
And soft as fresh butter or gruel;  
"Oh! Conor," says she, "come under the sea,  
And sup with me, my jewel."

"Acushla macree, light never saw me  
Drinking the common salt water;"  
Says Conor Camack, and shewed her his back;  
He might as well have shot her.  
"Aroon," says the fish, "if drink be your wish,  
Brandy, or Hollands, or Sherry,  
Or whiskey, quite raw, or fine usquebaugh,  
To make your poor heart merry;  
"Enough of each kind with me shall you find,  
I keep in a bottle of leather;  
Whatever, achree, is lost in the sea,  
Or sent me by my father.  
"Oh, Conor, astore! a shipful or more  
Could fit in that wonderful bottle;  
You might foot a jig, or drive a fat pig  
Readily down its throttle."  
"In troth will I go to see you below,"  
Says Conor, now feeling soft-hearted;  
And whack! with his pipes, like sea-larks or snipes,  
Over the waters darted.  
When Conor Camack bounced out of the smack,  
The mermaid lovingly caught him;  
And with a deep dive, all fresh and alive,  
Both galloped off to the bottom.  
And there Conor dwells with jewels and shells,  
In a cool grotto quite shady;  
With brandy galore, he plays evermore  
For the cold fish and their lady.  
Now boys of our land, join all heart and hand,  
From Conor's example take warning;  
'Tis very bad play to throw life away,  
For sake of a drop in the morning.

H. C.

## STANZAS.

I wandered at morn thro' the spangled parterre,  
The flower-scented odours were flung in the air;  
The breeze kissed the blossoms, and bent their sweet heads,  
And the pearly dew shone as it sprinkled their beds;  
The sun stepped in pride from the east nodding hills,  
And shook his bright locks o'er the silver-waved rills;  
The minstrels of nature sung sweet in the vale,  
And the music and odours were borne on the gale.  
So sweet is the morning of life's changeful day,  
When the blossoms of joy, love, and friendship look gay  
When hope sports delusive—when fortune seems kind—  
And fairy-formed visions float bright o'er the mind;  
Every scene of enchantment is friendship and love,  
Like flowers of the garden and strains of the grove;  
How dear and how sweet is delusion like this,  
In anticipation an Eden of bliss.  
I wandered again, but these odours were fled;  
The spirit of Autumn had slept on each bed:  
Where dew-drops had sparkled, the dry withered leaves  
Lay tossed in confusion. The blast that bereaves  
All nature of sweetness, had cast o'er the day  
The dark clouds of tempest. The sun shrank away  
To the chambers of peace, where the weary find rest,  
And the last gleam of light disappeared in the west.

"We had originally intended that the present Number, with the usual Title and Index, should have completed our present Volume. Anxious, however, to render the No. with the Index really worth the price charged for it, we have determined on giving, next Saturday, a Double Number, price 2d., which shall contain, besides a very handsome Vignette Title Page, a Guide to the Giants' Causeway, illustrated with six as well executed engravings of the Antrim Coast, (five of them designs by Nichol,) as have ever appeared in our Journal. They are intended to be placed at the commencement of the volume, as a kind of frontispiece. In these Designs and Engravings we have spared no expence, being anxious to close the volume in a way which might afford satisfaction to our readers, and give some idea of the manner in which the work shall be printed in future.

It now only remains for us to thank our numerous Correspondents for their valuable contributions; many of which still remain over, but shall appear in early numbers of our next volume—some of them in the first number.